

**James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, October 1,  
1781, from Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe  
Correspondence, Transcribed and Edited by Gerard W.  
Gawalt, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**

**James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson**

Caroline Oct. 1. 1781.

Dear Sir

I propos'd to myself the pleasure of visiting yrself & family before this at Monticello but the prospects below & the arrival of Genl. Washington in the State induced me to postpone the trip of pleasure to the less agreeable one to camp upon the idea of bearing some small part in bringing about the event we all so anxiously wish for. With this view I waited on Gov. Nelson & solicited some command in the Militia but was inform'd the Militia in the field was officer'd & of course that I could procure none whatever. This would have mortified me much had I not discover'd during my continuance with the army that Genl. W. had under his command 15000 regular troops, a force certainly very sufficient to reduce the post at York. On the contrary upon being inform'd of our force & the propriety of the appointments thro' the whole, I was the rather surpris'd the militia were detained at all, more especially when we take into consideration the difficulty of supply, for surely in the present state of things the militia will not render sufficient service to counterbalance the quantity of provisions they consume. I had, however, the good fortune to effect a point wh since the

interruption of our civil affairs in this state I have been very desirous to accomplish & in the expedience whereof was so happy as to have yr. Concurrence when with you last at Richmd. Colo. Josiah Parker has a ship just ready to sail to France & has been so kind as

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to offer me a passage in her, wh. I have accepted. I shod. be happy to wait on you before I sail & shall be sincerely sorry to leave the continent without wishing yr.self & family health & happiness in person, but as we sail the 10th or 12th of next month from some port south of Portsmouth & I have much business to transact in these few days I shall be at home, am unfortunately depriv'd of that pleasure. I have to desire of you a letter to each of our Ministers & also yr. Advice upon the plan I had better pursue as also where I had better visit. Since my return from Richmd. I have liv'd a very sedentary life upon a small estate I have in King Georges in course of wh. time have read all the books you mention on the subject of law. I have made such a disposition of the property I sold in Westmoreld. as to give me an interest nearly competent to my purpose without injuring the principal. I mean to convey to you that altho' I shall most probably be glad some time hence to acquire more by the practice of the law (if I have it in my power) I wod. still wish to prosecute my studies on the most liberal plan to qualify myself for any business I might chance to engage in. This if not profitable will be agreeable , for surely these acquirements

qualify a man not only for publick office, but enable him to bear prosperity or adversity in the capricious turns of fortune, with greater magnanimity & fortitude, by giving him resources within himself, of pleasure & content wh otherwise he wod. look for in vain from others. I wish you to say whether if I am so fortunate as to sail & arrive safe you wod. advise me to reside altogether in the South of France or (if possible) spend a year in the Temple in London before by return. I write you on my return home from below from Mr. Taliaferros & as I have not a moment to lose have only time to add that whatever commands you will favor me with I shall be happy to execute & that I am with my best respects for Mrs. Jefferson, yr. sincere friend & very humble servant,Jas. Monroe

RC (Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress).